



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EBU NATIONAL CLUB COMMITTEE
HELD AT HOTEL IMPERIAL, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON
ON TUESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2011**

Present: Sally Bugden (SB) (EBU Chairman)
Val Gibson (VG) (NCC Chairman)
Graham Jepson (GJ) (Outgoing Interim NCC Chairman)

Chris Harris (CH) (Midlands Regional CC Chairman)
Barbara Herold (BH) (Southeast Regional CC Chairman)
David Latchem (DL) (Southwest Regional CC Chairman)
Colin O'Hara (COH) (Eastern Regional CC Chairman)
Trevor Ward (TW) (Northern Regional CC Chairman)

Matt Betts (MB) (EBU Press & Communications Officer)
Krys Kazmierczak (KK) (EBU Club Liaison Officer)

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. Welcome and Thanks

SB welcomed the attendees and thanked GJ and all the outgoing Interim NCC Members for their work on the Committee over the previous three years.

1.2. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

Barry Capal (EBU General Manager)

3. Ways of working for the NCC

3.1. Thanks

VG also thanked GJ and all the outgoing Interim NCC Members for their work on the Committee over the previous three years.

3.2. Fit of the NCC with the Board and corporate responsibilities

VG outlined the fit of the NCC with the Board and the constitutional responsibilities of the group as a sub-committee of the Board.

3.3. *Review of the Terms of Reference*

The Terms of Reference for the NCC had been agreed by the Board. The group discussed them and confirmed their individual and collective understanding of the role of the NCC.

3.4. *Good standing*

VG explained the requirement of the Board for members of the NCC to be in good standing with the EBU.

3.5. *Working collectively and lead responsibilities*

VG outlined an aspiration that the NCC would work collectively. Members were happy to have lead responsibilities on behalf of the group and lead discussions within the group. KK was tasked with circulating the Terms of Reference to all NCC members to see who would be happy to lead and contribute to individual items.

Action: KK and All

3.6. *Meetings of NCC and RCCs*

It was agreed that there would be two meetings of the NCC a year in London: one in May and one in November, with Regional CC meetings held two months prior to each. Regional Chairmen would now begin organising their next respective Regional meetings. RCCs to be informed three weeks in advance of their meetings of any matters the EBU wished to be raised.

Action: Regional Chairmen

3.7. *Liaison between meetings*

The NCC would maintain contact between meetings by means of email and telephone. Members would liaise with the County Club Representatives (CCRs) in their Regions, keep them informed and gather feedback from them.

Action: All

3.8. *Function*

It was agreed that the function of the NCC was to give clubs a voice, listen to their concerns, make sure they received replies and got results. Wherever possible research and evidence would inform decisions to ensure that the best result was obtained. The NCC aspired to research and champion innovation and be forward looking.

3.9. *Working with the County*

The way each CCR would work with/alongside their County Association would be dependent on the local structure and their own particular relationship to the County Management Committee. SB stressed that the NCC and EBU Board were there in order to help clubs to develop their activities and membership.

4. **“Charity” sessions exempt from P2P**

CH spoke to the suggestion from Stratford-upon-Avon Bridge Club that there be a sliding scale of “Charity” sessions exempt from P2P according to the number of sessions a club played in a year. It was agreed that the cost implications would be investigated on the basis of both club sessions and player sessions and the matter put for discussion and review before the EBU Board at its January meeting.

Action: KK, MB and VG/SB

5. How can we share best practice?

5.1. *Club Focus (CF)*

CF was seen to be an important medium for the dissemination of information on best practice to clubs. It was agreed that the notification of publication should be widened to include all club officers, rather than just the main club contact. The CCRs had been asked to publicise *CF* to the clubs in their counties.

5.1.1. It was intended to include a letters page in future editions of *CF* and letters would be encouraged. A 'Master Index' to articles would also be included.

Action: MB and KK

5.2. *New ideas*

It was hoped that new ideas would be forthcoming via CCRs to be discussed at the Regional Meetings and brought to the NCC meetings if agreed to be worthy of further consideration.

5.3. *NCC Minutes*

It was agreed that the minutes of NCC meetings would be published on the EBU website to be available for all.

Action: MB and KK

5.4. *Contacts*

A contact list of email addresses for all CCRs would be made available on the EBU website and in *CF* after permissions had been obtained. All members of the NCC agreed to their email addresses being made available in this way.

Action: MB and KK

5.5. *Daytime bridge*

Daytime bridge was considered to be an important growth area, and this needs to be publicised to clubs.

Action: All

5.6. *Newspaper articles and syndication*

MB reported that it is easier to get bridge items into the local press than the national press. Many local newspapers would be glad of material to fill their pages and might be persuaded to run a regular bridge column. MB agreed to organise a template article which clubs could supply to their local newspaper (syndication). Writing letters to your local newspaper including news about your club could be an effective means of publicity. Clubs might like to have a member of their committee responsible for publicity and communications.

Action: MB

5.7. *Publicising County events via BridgeWebs*

CO'H had been in discussion with BridgeWebs to make a facility available on all club BridgeWebs websites for County Associations to publicise their events. When this comes online, CCRs would be asked to relay the information to Counties and Clubs as appropriate.

6. Education (Club Teachers and TDs)

6.1. *Club Teacher Training*

The uptake of places on the EBU's free Club Teacher Training Courses was good, but there were still many clubs that had not taken advantage of the offer. KK stressed that bridge teaching at the club was the most important way of ensuring that a club continued to thrive and recruit new members. More needed to be done to persuade clubs to find someone to go on the Club Teacher courses and begin teaching at the clubs. This should be a high priority for the new network of CCRs. It was agreed that more would be done to publicise the courses through *Club Focus* and *English Bridge*.

Action: All

6.1.1. The issue was raised that some clubs who agreed to nominate a teacher for the course were not fully aware of the terms of the contract for the Club Teacher Courses. It was agreed that the timing, addressee and wording of the accompanying letters would be reviewed with this in mind.

Action: SB, MB and KK

6.2. *Publicity*

When planning publicity for their club or bridge courses, clubs should understand that a single advertisement would not be likely to produce sufficient results. An approach involving different forms of communication is needed. Clubs requiring assistance or advice should contact Matt Betts.

6.3. *TD Courses*

The EBU's TD Courses were well attended, and the buy-one-get-one-free offer was continuing.

7. Update on current issues:

i) **Stratification**

Take up of stratification by clubs appears to have been low so far. Reasons appear to include a lack of understanding of the benefits to motivate newcomers and less experienced players. An article on the subject by TW had been printed in the latest edition of *English Bridge*. More articles and letters would be invited for future editions of *Club Focus* and *EB* from clubs successfully using stratification. CCRs to be asked to help spread an understanding of the benefits. TW agreed to write an article for *CF*.

Action: BH, TW, DL and KK

ii) **Simultaneous Pairs**

Preparations are well under way for the new in-house administration of Simultaneous Pairs events by the EBU from 1 April 2012. SB announced that there will be a significant price reduction to £2.50 per person (online access to files and commentaries). Clubs can order packs of commentary booklets at a cost of £8 per pack of 20. A test event would be run on 6 December 2011.

iii) **National Grading Scheme**

Testing is under way. The NGS is expected to go live in the first quarter of 2012.

iv) **Club Management Handbook**

The CMH is in the final review stages and will be made available to clubs early in 2012.

v) **Master Points**

The new system of Blue Master Points to be introduced at the beginning of 2013 was discussed. More publicity will be needed to promote an understanding of the new system and the reasons for its introduction. It was being introduced in response to concerns raised by clubs and counties about the difficulties of winning green points in outlying areas and has undergone a long process of consultations. The scheme has been designed to offer an additional opportunity to clubs and players whilst retaining the integrity of the existing Master Points scheme.

Action: All

8. English Bridge

8.1. *Frequency of publication and balance*

It was felt that the current frequency of publication of *EB* was correct and the balance of articles for club and tournament players was much improved.

8.2. *EB articles on the website*

It was not clear how useful the posting of EB articles on the website was, but the present level of selections should remain there as an advertisement for the magazine.

8.3. *Club Player Quiz*

Members were asked to canvass opinion on the Club Player Quiz.

Action: All

8.4. *Beginners/improvers' articles*

It was suggested that there be at least two pages with articles exclusively for beginners/improvers, preferably by known tournament players.

Action: EB Editor

8.5. *Format*

Surveys had revealed that the vast majority of members wished to receive their magazine in paper format. However, this needed to be kept under review, and it may in future prove necessary to offer an electronic version too.

8.6. *Master Point promotions*

There was a strong feeling from some CCRs that all Master Point promotions needed to be publicised through *EB*, but this is simply not feasible. It was suggested that PDFs with all County Members' MP promotions should be sent out to all Counties. A regular notification of Club Members' MP promotions in Clubs' Member Areas on the EBU website is still on the list of projects to be implemented by the IT department. It was pointed out that Clubs can print out a list of MP ranks of their members from ScoreBridge.

Action: KK

8.7. “*Counties’ pages*”

There was a suggestion that the ‘County News’ pages should be removed from *EB*, and this would be put forward to the Editorial Board to consider.

Action: SB and MB

9. Board discussion in January on NCC

VG explained that she would have some time at the Board meeting in January on NCC matters. She would update the Board on the implementation of the RCC and NCC structure.

Action: VG

10. A.O.B.

10.1. **Election terms for NCC Members and CCRs**

It was agreed that the election term for an NCC Member should be three years, with a maximum of two terms. Furthermore, it was agreed that a letter be sent to all County Chairmen recommending that the term of office for a CCR be similarly set for three years and a maximum of two terms.

Action: KK

10.2. **Deputising**

If an NCC member be unable to attend an NCC meeting, arrangements should be made for another member of the RCC to deputise.

10.3. **Future meetings**

The following dates were agreed for 2012:

Tuesday 22nd May 2012

Tuesday 20th November 2012

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 22nd May 2012